and at the very same time were dancing precisely the same dance underground immediately beneath them. The object of making so much noise was to intercept all communication with the sickness a'hots who were in the two men. The best doctor is the one who most jumps, howls and beats the earth with his feet. 755

The public who surrounded these goings on was there to give importance and greater virtue to the treatment, but the suspicion was in the air that the a'hot, on leaving the body of the possessed might take it into its mind to enter one of the other persons present.

This scene convinces me that: among the Indians, doctors earn their bread by the sweat of their... whole bodies; that among them also deceivers, by dint of much deceiving, finally [212] deceive themselves; and that the rabble was really convinced of the efficacy of the exorcisms.

And I was about to smile, moved by scorn and pity, but I remembered that c'etait tout comme chez nous [it was all much the same as it is with us--Translator] and... the smile died before it was born.

Chapter XII

Social Matters

These Indians do not differentiate the seasons of the year as we do, but rather by the several harvests: thus they speak of the season of algarrobo pod harvest, etc. 805

How could they even begin to divide the year into months or moons if they only count up to four? This very fact guarantees us a priori that they have not busied themselves with establishing the laws of the earth's or sun's movements. [802]

In spite of this it is remarkable that they divide the day up into innumerable portions according to the position of the sun, which takes the place of our hours. They also differentiate between various constellations such as the Pleiades, Venus, the Milky Way, and Centaur. [821]

And yet they do not have a word meaning "year." The Matacos use one, c-lúppe, which means period, and which has the same indeterminate meaning which that word has with us. Instead of "day," they say "sun" (i-qúa-la), and in place of "month,"

Chaco Indians SK4

Chapter X

Regarding Numerals

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In general it can be said that the Indians of the Chaco can count only up to four. This holds true for: the Mocovies who are bounded on the south by the provinces of Santa Fe and Córdoba and on the west by the province of Santiago; the Matacos who in the same direction have a common border with the latter and with Orán; the Tobas who are bounded by said nations and the river Paraguay, along the banks of which they penetrate Bolivian territory; the Vilelas and Chulupíes, who at the time of this writing amount to only a tribe or family or two and are either dispersed among the other nations named above or have been absorbed by them.

However, there also are the Chiriguanos and possibly other nations in addition, all of whom are established in the Bolivian section of that immense wooded plain called the Gran Chaco and who can count indefinitely. There are also the other Indian groupings who live in the northern regions of the Chaco and who are able to count beyond four if I am to give credence to my first mate on the boat who, although he was a Mataco, supplied me with terms expressive of larger figures. These he had gathered from outside contact.

A propos of this matter of being able to count only up to four, 000 I see that Quatrefages, in his last work La especie humana ["The Human Species"--Translator], seems to doubt this fact, which he interprets differently yet without supplying any explanation for his thesis. It would seem that he could not bring himself to admit such a phenomenon, and would only go as far as to accept that certain peoples might lack actual numbers beyond four but never the concept of such numbers. But even if we can accept such a hypothesis as possible psychologically so to speak, the facts, looked at from the point of view of philology, belie it. Understanding as we do that there is the closest of affinities between word and idea, one must admit that the latter, without the former, at very best can only exist in a vague, confused and undefined state which evades communication. We ourselves, for instance, are unable to use the technical terms of a given art or science of which we are not masters, however well we may know and differentiate between their products.

Just to clarify this I shall cite a personal case which will be helpful to the reader in arriving at an opinion.

I was talking to a chief who was recounting his feats of prowess to me for the first time.

In answer to my question: "Where are you from?" he unexpectedly answered: Num-maitta-ntocq-Téüj-tocuéy, stretching and then drawing back his right arm as he pointed towards the North.

[256] I was very much surprised and said, interrupting him: Ntde-ʾhije? -- "Where?" -- I had understood him to say that he wanted to tell me about a town on the Teuco River, called Umaitá like that town in Paraguay near the mouth of the Bermejo, and my curiosity became excited to a great pitch with the idea that I was about to make an ethnographic discovery of importance.

What he had actually tried to say to me was this: "I-(nu) killed many far away on the Teuco."

Nu ilon ntócq (I have killed many)...; and right away he commenced to count in Mataco from one to four, enclosing his right hand in his left and opening his fingers one by one, all except his thumb. But when he got to four he was at a loss how to go on, yet as he was squatting, he began to make vertical lines in the earth with his finger saying Toj each time he did so, which means "this one," and every now and then he would raise his head and his hand with his thumb concealed by his four fingers and say, looking at me: Uitd toj which means "and this also," and thus he continued about twenty times, always being careful to drive home to me that in addition to the lines he was making on the ground I must remember the original four which he had counted on his hand. At last he put an end to his counting by saying ntocq ntocq which is "many, many."

And this was very true. This chief had been at one time the scourge of the frontier whites and the whip of his Indian enemies until finally, old and much battered by the whites, he left off warring, gained a government pension and settled down with all his followers -- very much reduced in numbers -- near Fort Gorriti, on the left bank of the Bermejo River. It happened that near Fort Aguirre, on the right bank of the Teuco, some 50 kilometers northeast of Gorriti, another band of Indians had attempted an invasion but were themselves the object of a surprise attack in their village, part of their number being killed and others imprisoned.

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These latter, bound and with their hands tied behind their backs, elbow to elbow and forming a chain of some 30 or 40 individuals, were handed over to the chief so that he might put them to death. He did most of the killing himself with a spear. While the massacre was in progress most of the victims remained silent, while others kept up a continual murmuring such as is done in their religious ceremonies. These were, without a doubt, witchdoctors.

I passed through the place of this tragedy five years after the event and could see no sign of human bones belonging to the victims' unburied corpses. The flood waters had carried them off and the winds had covered all remains. Only after much searching and with the help of a soldier who had witnessed the event was I able to find three skulls by digging among some bushes. The national government tried to punish the officer in charge of Fort Aguirre and it [257] is possible that this was done. However, one must accept the fact that there is no possible compatibility between civilized and savage elements; and all individual philanthropy, all a priori reasoning made far from the scene, lose their practical validity in this theater of fighting brought about by the head-on collision of the two races. Each one thinks that the destruction of the enemy is the easiest and also the most natural expedient in the world. Therefore the final extermination of the Redskins at the hands of the whites is inevitable, by means of cold steel, fire, expatriation and mass dispersion as though they were beasts.

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Coming back to the matter of numerals, one must never be led to suppose that these Indians are not aware that 10 fish are half of 20 fish. A dog, when he rushes upon a second bone thrown to him and growls because some other dog tries to get the first bone, is also responding to the same perceptual stimulus. Nevertheless the fact of not possessing an adequate word for expressing this recognition reveals, in my opinion, a lack of abstraction. The form of a language and the very manner in which words evolve from their original sounds owe much to the state of maturity of the speakers' capability for mental abstraction.

Regarding the Mataco words used to indicate the first four numbers, I must say that their great length and the gesticulations which went with them surprised me very much. It seemed to me that each one of these expressions, if it was to justify its accompanying

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gesticulations, must be a whole sentence. Even though a great deal of time has elapsed I think I can still explain them and not fall into error as I do so.

"One" is hoté-cuuaj ›hi, and one finger is raised. One can also say hoteji and hotecoaji. Now hoté means "as," cuuáj means "finger," and hi (nasal h) is a particle which indicates possession, container etc. so, not worrying too much about this small elemental difference which is so common in every language, and especially in this one which undergoes so many shifts, we may say that the translation of hotécuaji is: "as finger has" ("this which I show").

"Two" is hoté quuasi, and two fingers are raised. Quuas is the plural, so to speak, of cuoaj according to this tongue, and thus the translation of the above is "as fingers has."

"Three" is laj tdi qua yél, and three fingers are raised, the little finger remaining folded and covered by the left hand. Now laj means "without" or "no"; el means "other"; quai is too similar to quoají to allow for doubt, and so we may say that the translation is "without the other finger." The same may be said for lája echecuoya -- "widower without a husband" [sic].

"Four" is tdi qualéss híquí and I don't know how to go about translating it literally and so shall not try. However one can perceive that in qualéss there is a plural iqui form, which is a word that often accompanies hi, and which [258] is to be found in phrases in which we have the idea of "to be" expressed, with other analogous ones -- it is therefore probable that it refers to the gestures which go with each numeral.

These gestures were not made only by that chief but also by other Indians of the central Chaco and by Faustino who could count as well as any of us. There must be some relation between the gestures and the words. The etymologies which I offer, in my opinion, explain the case more satisfactorily than those which are usually given in analogous philological problems.

However, one must not judge the worth and elegance of the original by the literal translations. Where would the elegance of most compound words be if we translated their Greek originals directly? For example; "Panorama" -- "all seen....!!"

And as far as the intellectual value of this manner of expressing numerals is concerned, is its genesis not quite natural? The Guaraní